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This is the author's manuscript

Original Citation:

Availability:

This version is available <http://hdl.handle.net/2318/1641763> since 2017-06-16T16:31:21Z

Publisher:

Austrian Society for Higher Education (ÖGHD)

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An integrated approach for education/training in Veterinary Public Health (VPH) by the Department of Veterinary Science, University of Turin (DVS_UNITO): the experiences of the “VPH mobile clinic” and the “VPH practical weeks”

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Introduction: All graduating veterinarians from European vet schools must demonstrate to have acquired the EAEVE-ESEVT “Day-One-skills”(1) and the OIE “Day1competencies” [2]. In order to provide 4-5th year undergraduate veterinary students with more efficient tools for VPH learning, from 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 academic years, and from 2013/14 to-date, two integrated practical teaching methods were respectively implemented.

Methods: During the period 2008-2012, lecturers/teachers of the VPH disciplines - after having taught their respective curricular courses - did organize a series of scheduled field activities in collaboration with veterinary officials of the ASLTO3 (ASL=Local Health Units-Vet Services) in Turin Province. Groups of 5-6 students participated in those practical VPH training activities, called “VPH Mobile Clinic” (half-a-day duration), carrying out hands on activities covering a multifaceted set of VPH action, routinely performed by vet officials. Ad hoc seminars on VPH topics have also been given by the same vets during VPH classes. From 2013 to-date, in order to implement the revised veterinary curriculum at national level, the VPH practical training activities (6 ECTS) –now called “VPH training weeks”- are provided to single students under the supervision of the ASL vet officials only. Students can rely on 15 ASLs throughout the Piemonte Region to take their practical VPH training. Training activities on food hygiene are performed at small-medium food processing plants, while meat inspection activities are carried out at the small didactic abattoir at the vet campus, and at large slaughterhouses in the Region. Students have a common list of activities to be performed, daily recorded on a log-book and countersigned by the vet officials/tutors. A satisfaction and evaluation questionnaire is administered to students and to tutors at the end of each academic year, and the results are evaluated by the DVS_UNITO Practical Training Committee (PTC).

Results: A total of 612 students participated in 91 practical sessions of the “Mobile VPH Clinic”. At the end of each academic year, students gave a 15’ presentation to the students from the other groups, to teachers and vet officials/tutors, and got evaluated (mean grade: 27/30). As regards the “VPH training weeks”, a total of 495 students were so far sent out for their practical VPH training to the selected ASLs. The satisfaction questionnaires answered, respectively by the students to evaluate the training received, and by the vets/tutors to evaluate the students, yielded the following results: excellent 75% (students), 92% (tutors); good 23%, 7.5%; sufficient 2.5%, 0%; poor 0.5%, 0%.

Discussion and Conclusion: The two VPH training methods are not fully comparable, both have their pros and cons. However, students, lectures and tutors considered both approaches interesting and useful especially to complement and reinforce the curricular contents previously provided in classroom. The PTC considers important

to reinforce the supervision/liaison on the students and vet o_cials and timely discuss di_culties encountered. By the end of the current academic year, a re-evaluation of both experiences will be carried out and the current method could be likely adjusted /improved.

Acknowledgments: The management of DVS_UNITO would like to sincerely thank all vet officials/tutors from the 15 ASLs in Piemonte Region for their indispensable contribution during the “VPH practical weeks”: without their valuable collaboration and dedicated work the VPH practical training activities would not have been possible. The contribution by Dr Vincenzo Fedele, former director of Veterinary Services-ASLTO3 Pinerolo, who enthusiastically supported the “VPH mobile clinic” since its inception, is also acknowledged here.

References:

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